**SYLLABUS FOR SOC\*K101: PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY ON-LINE**

Course: SOC\*K101

Course Title: Principles of Sociology

Course Schedule: On-Line

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 12:30 – 1:00 p.m. and 3:30 – 4:30 p.m., or by appointment (please always confirm with me first!)

1. **Course Description**

This course is a study of the major concepts used in the field of sociology. The nature of institutions will be examined both individually and in their dynamic interrelationship. Emphasis is placed on understanding the impact of society on our lives, and on increasing our effectiveness in controlling our destinies within it.

1. **Course Overview and Learning Outcomes**

Sociology is the study of groups, organizations, institutions, and societies, and their influence on human behavior. Sociology goes beyond individual and psychological explanations of human behavior to look at social factors and trends that shape individual behavior and the behavior of groups and societies. These social trends and factors include cultural aspects of societies, such as beliefs, values, and social norms. They also include structural aspects of societies, which refers to the positions and roles people occupy in groups, institutions, and societies as a whole. Sociology also focuses on patterns of social inequality, especially class, racial and ethnic, and gender inequalities in society—how they are created and maintained and how they affect our opportunities, beliefs and attitudes, and behavior in society. Overall, sociology allows us to analyze societies and social behavior from a critical perspective, thereby providing us with a better understanding of social problems and issues.

The course is divided into three parts, with an exam after each part. The first part of the course will examine how sociologists study the social world. This will discuss the idea of sociology as a science, the research methods used by sociologists to study the social world, and theoretical perspectives on society and social behavior. The second part of the course will explore the sociological concepts of culture and social structure, and how aspects of culture and social structure influence human behavior. In terms of culture, we will look at concepts and issues such as culture, subcultures and countercultures, socialization, deviance, crime, and social control. In terms of social structure, we will examine concepts such as statuses and roles, groups and organizations, social institutions, and community. The final part of the course will study social inequality in our society. We will consider different perspectives on inequality and the role of our educational system in creating and maintaining social inequality in our society. In addition, we will discuss concepts such as social class, race/ethnicity, and gender, and how they affect social inequality in our society. Throughout the course, students will be introduced to a number of prominent classical theorists in the history of sociology, such as Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Parsons, Goffman, Merton, and Becker, as well as a variety of prominent theorists and researchers today.

Learning outcomes refer to knowledge, skills, and abilities you are expected to develop and demonstrate in this course. In this course, you will:

* Demonstrate knowledge of research methods used in sociology
* Understand and apply major theoretical perspectives in sociology
* Demonstrate knowledge of major figures, concepts, and theories in the field of sociology
* Demonstrate an understanding of how social factors influence individual and group values, attitudes, and beliefs
* Develop an awareness of American culture as well as cultural differences within American society and around the globe
* Understand trends in social inequality in American society
* Understand causes and consequences of social inequality in American society
* Understand causes and consequences of racial/ethnic inequalities in American society
* Understand causes and consequences of gender inequalities in American society
* Learn about real world settings and situations that reflect and illustrate sociological concepts and perspectives

1. **Course Readings**

The required book for the class is:

* Susan J. Ferguson, *Mapping the Social Landscape: Readings in Sociology, 8th Edition*. Sage Publishing.

This book is an edited volume of readings, rather than a traditional textbook. While there is no required traditional text book, you may find it useful to consult a textbook as an additional source of information. One textbook that I have used in the past and found useful is Lisa J. McIntyre, *The Practical Skeptic: Core Concepts in Sociology*, McGraw Hill. Copies are available on reserve in the TRCC library. You may also purchase of copy of this or any other textbook on-line if you wish.

Some of the required weekly readings are available on-line as listed in the Course Schedule in Section VI. If you are unable to access the website by clicking on the link in the syllabus, you should copy and paste the website address into your browser. Assigned weekly readings should be done by the beginning of the week.

Each week there will be a question pertain to the required readings for the week in the weekly learning module. Your written responses to these questions are due by Monday morning at 9:00 a.m. They will be graded with either a check plus (good, representing 3 points), a check (satisfactory, representing 2 points), or a check minus (unsatisfactory, representing 1 point). At the end of the semester, I will add up your total number of points and assign an overall grade based on that.

1. **Course Assignments and Evaluation**

Grades will be assigned using a standard 4 point scale that is used by the college to determine your overall GPA. The scale operates as follows:

* A+ = 4.33
* A = 4.0
* A- = 3.67
* B+ = 3.33
* B = 3.0
* B- = 2.67
* C+ = 2.33
* C = 2.00
* C- = 1.67
* D+ = 1.33
* D = 1.0
* D- = .67
* F = 0.0

Your final course grade will be determined in the following manner:

* You will receive an overall grade for your responses to the weekly questions regarding the required readings for the week. This will count for 10% of your final grade.
* You will receive an overall discussion grade based on your participation in weekly discussions that will count for 15% of your final grade.
* Two out of class assignment will count for a total of 15% of your final grade (7.5% each)
* Three exams—the first exam will count for 10%, the second exam will count for 15%, and the final exam will count for 20% of your final grade
* A final project will count for 15% of your final grade

Your overall discussion grade will be determined by calculating the average of your weekly discussion grades. Your weekly discussion grade will be based on:

* how long your posts are and how much effort you seem to be putting into them
* the use of appropriate spelling, grammar, and language
* how well you discuss and address questions I raise, including questions I raise in the posts I make during the week
* whether they are introducing new information (such as relevant websites, for example) and points that enhance the discussion
* whether you post intermittently throughout the week, as opposed to making all your posts at one time, especially at the end of the week

**In order to receive an A grade for the week, you will need to post at least 3 times each week, and your first post must be made by midnight the day after the weekly discussion forum is opened.** However, this alone will not necessarily guarantee an A if the above criteria are not satisfactorily met. You are also free to make more than 3 posts a week to help ensure that you receive a good grade. You are free to respond to the posts of other students, but your responses should address questions and topics raised by me throughout the week. Weekly discussions will be closed by 9:00 a.m. the following week when a new weekly learning module is posted.

All assignments and exams involve written work, and poor writing, including poor spelling, grammar, and syntax, will negatively affect your grade. If you need assistance with your writing skills, I strongly urge you to visit The Writing Center in room C117.

All assignments and exams are due at specified times. Work received up to one day late will receive up to a partial letter grade deduction. Work received more than one day late will receive a full letter grade deduction. Once I have graded and returned assignments and exams, late work will no longer be accepted without my permission. **Failure to complete assignments and/or exams will hurt your final grade more than submitted work that receives an F but reflects appropriate effort.**

Students are expected to follow to standards of academic honesty.  If there is a question about cheating or plagiarism, the college’s **Academic Integrity Policy** (revised 8 January 2003) will be followed.

If you have a disability of any kind that may affect your progress in this course, please contact Matt Liscum, the TRCC Disability Service Provider (DSP) at 860-383-5240. His office is Room A-119 in the Counseling and Advising Office. Please note that accommodations cannot be provided until you provide written authorization from a DSP.

1. **Course Schedule**

The following schedule is a list of the lecture topics that are intended to be covered each week as well as the required readings for the week. Any revisions will be announced during the course.

**Part I. Sociology as Social Science**

Week 1 Wednesday 8/28: The Sociological Perspective

Readings: Ferguson readings 1, 2, and 3

Week 2 Wednesday 9/4: Sociological Theory

Readings:

* Ferguson reading 7
* Quality Research International, “Case Study: Durkheim's study of suicide: inductive or deductive?” on-line at <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/methodology/RRW2pt2Casestudydurkheim.php>
* Act for Libraries, “What are Emile Durkheim’s Four Types of Suicide?”, on-line at <http://www.actforlibraries.org/what-are-emile-durkheims-four-types-of-suicide/>

Week 3 Wednesday 9/11: Sampling and Research Methods

Readings:

* Ferguson reading 8
* Grimes, “If You Want to Observe ‘Em, Join ‘Em”, *The New York Times*, June 16, 2008, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/16/books/16grimes.html?_r=0>

**Assignment 1 posted; due Wednesday 9/18 by 9:00 a.m.**

Week 4 Wednesday 9/18: Theoretical Perspectives

Readings: Ferguson readings 4, 5, 19, 38, and 40

**Part II: Culture and Social Structure**

Week 5 Wednesday 9/25: Culture

Readings: Ferguson readings 10, 11, 12, and 44

**Exam 1 posted; due Wednesday 10/2 by 9:00 a.m.**

Week 6 Wednesday 10/2: Socialization

Readings: Ferguson readings 16

Week 7 Wednesday 10/9: Deviant Behavior and Social Control

Readings: Ferguson readings 6, 20, 21, and 22

**Assignment 2 posted; due Wednesday 10/16 at 9:00 a.m.**

Week 8 Wednesday 10/16: Social Structure

Readings: Ferguson readings 17 and 18

**Final Project instructions posted; due Friday 12/6 by 9:00 a.m.**

Week 9 Wednesday 10/23: Community

Readings:

* Robert D. Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital”, *Journal of Democracy* 6:1, Jan 1995, 65-78, at <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/assoc/bowling.html>
* Joseph Stromberg, “Eric Klinenberg on Going Solo”, Smithsonian.com, at <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/Eric-Klinenberg-on-Going-Solo.html?c=y&page=1>

**Part III: Social Inequality**

Week 10 Wednesday 10/30: Social Stratification and Social Class

Readings: Ferguson readings 15, 24, 41, and 55

**Exam 2 posted; due Wednesday 11/6 by 9:00 a.m.**

Week 11 Wednesday 11/6: Income Inequality and Poverty

Readings: Ferguson readings 23, 26, and 37

Week 12 Wednesday 11/13: Education

Readings: Ferguson readings 50, 51, and 52

Week 13 Wednesday 11/20: Racial and Ethnic Inequality

Readings: Ferguson readings 14, 25, 31, 32, 33, and 34

Week 14 Monday 12/2: Gender Inequality

Readings: Ferguson readings 9, 13, 27, 28, 29, and 42

**Final Project Due Friday 12/6 by 9:00 a.m.**

**Final Exam posted Friday 12/6 by 10:00 a.m.; due Friday 12/13 by 9:00 a.m.**